

**REMARKS**

The Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter of claim 3 is noted with appreciation.

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application. Allowable claim 3 has been rewritten in independent form in the manner kindly suggested by the Examiner in the Office Action. Claims 1-2 and 4-9 have been amended to better define the claimed invention. Claims 10-20 have been added to provide Applicants with the scope of protection to which they are believed entitled. The drawings and the specification have been revised to include the Examiner's suggested changes. No new matter has been introduced through the foregoing amendments.

The objections to the drawings and specification are believed overcome in view of the above amendments.

Claim 3 should be allowed as indicated in the Office Action.

The art rejections of claims 1-2 and 4-9 relying primarily on *Takiguchi* (U.S. Patent No. 5,130,935) are noted. Although Applicants do not agree with the Examiner's position, amendments have nevertheless been made to the independent claims to better define the claimed invention over the art. It should be noted that the above amendments have been made solely for the purpose of expediting prosecution and are not necessitated by the Examiner's rejections.

In particular, independent claim 1 now additionally recites that **substantially all** the color data image is used in the summing up process. The added limitation finds solid support in the original specification, e.g., page 10, lines 7-9 from bottom, and the drawings, e.g., FIG. 6 and step 46 in FIG. 5. In contrast, in *Takiguchi*, the correction values are determined based only on a fraction of the image. See column 2, lines 28-55 of *Takiguchi*. The teaching references do not appear to fairly teach or suggest the newly added limitation. Therefore, amended independent claim 1 is patentable over the applied references.

Independent claims 7-9 have been amended to include limitations similar to the new limitation of amended claim 1. Accordingly, new independent claims 7-9 are also believed patentable over the art.

Dependent claims 2, 4-6 and new claims 10-13 depend from claim 1, 7, 8, or 9, and are considered patentable at least for the reason advanced with respect to amended claim 1.

New independent claim 14 is patentable over the art because the art, especially *Takiguchi*, fails to disclose, teach or suggest that the step of calculating a color adjustment amount is performed **regardless of the number of the pixels** that belong to the region of said reference color. In *Takiguchi*, if the number of the pixels falling within the skin color region is less than  $\alpha$ , the procedure is immediately terminated without calculating a color adjustment amount. See column 2, lines 41-44 of *Takiguchi*. The teaching references do not appear to fairly teach or suggest the highlighted limitation of new claim 14. Therefore, new independent claim 14 is patentable over the applied references.

Claims 15-20 depend from claim 14, and are considered patentable at least for the reason advanced with respect to claim 14. Claims 15-20 are also patentable on their own merits since these claims recite other features of the invention neither disclosed, taught nor suggested by the applied art.

For example, as to claims 16-17 and 20, the applied references, especially *Takiguchi*, fail to disclose, teach or suggest the claimed creating a **histogram** of said color image.

As to claim 18, the applied references, especially *Takiguchi*, fail to disclose, teach or suggest that in the step of calculating a color adjustment amount, the color adjustment amount is calculated using **frequencies** corresponding to the colors of the pixels that belong to the region of said reference color.

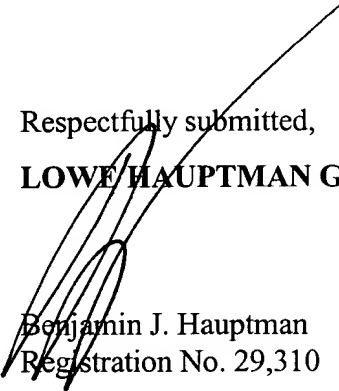
As to claim 19, the applied references, especially *Takiguchi*, fail to disclose, teach or suggest that the determining step comprises processing **all pixels** of said color image.

Each of the Examiner's rejections has been traversed/overcome. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims are now in condition for allowance. Early and favorable indication of allowance is courteously solicited.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, Applicant's attorney of record, to facilitate advancement of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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**Date: June 30, 2004**